

REMARKS

In the Office Action mailed February 9, 2006, the Examiner took the following action: (1) noted Applicants' use of the mark "PAR-A-MATIC®"; and (2) rejected claims 1-6, 8-11, 14-18, 20, and 22-35 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Schultz (U.S. 4,198,180). The Examiner acknowledged, however, that claims 7, 12-13, 19, 21, and 36-39 would be allowable if rewritten to include the limitations of their respective base and intermediate claims. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

I. Amendments to the Specification

Applicants have amended the specification to correct the use of the mark "PAR-A-MATIC®" as requested by the Examiner, and to correct minor informalities (typographical errors) noted by Applicants. No new matter has been added.

II. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants express appreciation to the Examiner for acknowledging the presence of allowable subject matter. Without additional comment and without prejudice as to the merits of the Examiner's rejections, Applicants have amended claims and canceled claims in order to expedite the issuance of the subject matter acknowledged as being allowable, and without prejudice to the filing of subsequent divisional or continuation applications to pursue allowance of one or more of the rejected claims.

More specifically, Applicants have amended claim 1 to include the limitations of claim 7 (and intervening claim 5), thereby placing claim 1 in condition for allowance. Claims 5 and 7 have been canceled, and claim 6 has been amended to depend from claim 1. Therefore, claims 1-4, 6, and 8-9 are now in condition for allowance.

Applicants have amended claim 10 to include the limitations of claim 12, placing claim 10 in condition for allowance. Claim 12 has been canceled, and claim 13 has been amended to depend from claim 10. Therefore, claims 10-11 and 14-21 are also in condition for allowance.

III. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 102(b)

Claims 22-35 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Schultz (U.S. 4,198,180).

Claims 22-28

As amended, claim 22 recites a method of performing a manufacturing operation on a workpiece, comprising: while advancing a manufacturing tool toward the workpiece, sensing a first thrust condition exerted upon the manufacturing tool; while advancing the manufacturing tool into engagement with the workpiece, sensing a second thrust condition exerted upon the manufacturing tool; while advancing the manufacturing tool into engagement with the workpiece, sensing a return from the second thrust condition at least partially to the first thrust condition; and *retracting the manufacturing tool away from the workpiece based on the sensing of the return from the second thrust condition at least partially to the first thrust condition.* (emphasis added).

Claim 22 now specifically relates the retraction of the manufacturing tool away from the workpiece *based on the return from the second thrust condition at least partially to the first thrust condition,* thereby avoiding the inherent step of retracting the drill of Schultz. Accordingly, claim 22 is now in condition for allowance. Claims 23-28 depend from claim 22 and are allowable at least due to their dependencies on claim 22, and also due to additional limitations recited in those claims. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of claims 22-28 as being anticipated by Schultz.

Claims 29-35

Similarly, amended claim 29 recites a method of performing a drilling operation on a workpiece, comprising providing a thrust sensing valve operatively coupled to a drill member; while advancing the drill member toward the workpiece, sensing a first thrust condition using the thrust sensing valve; while continuing to advance the drill member into engagement with the workpiece, sensing a second thrust condition using the thrust sensing valve; while advancing the drill member into engagement with the workpiece, sensing a return from the second thrust condition at least partially to the first thrust condition; and *retracting the drill member away from the workpiece based on the sensing of the return from the second thrust condition at least partially to the first thrust condition.* (emphasis added).

Claim 29 now specifically relates the retraction of the manufacturing tool away from the workpiece *based on the return from the second thrust condition at least partially to the first thrust condition*, thereby avoiding the inherent step of retracting the drill of Schultz. Accordingly, claim 29 is now in condition for allowance. Claims 30-35 (and 36-39) depend from claim 29 and are allowable at least due to their dependencies on claim 29, and also due to additional limitations recited in those claims. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of claims 29-35 as being anticipated by Schultz.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-4, 6, 8-11, and 13-39 are now in condition for allowance. If there are any remaining matters that may be handled by telephone conference, the Examiner is kindly invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully Submitted,

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